PZ 3
.P9317M

FT MEADE
GenColl

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Mistletoe Bough

Copyrighted, 1891.
GEO. S. HARRIS & SONS,
Philadelphia, New York and Chicago.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
COPYRIGHT
DEC 12 1891
WASHINGTON.

THE MISTLETOE BOUGH.

By

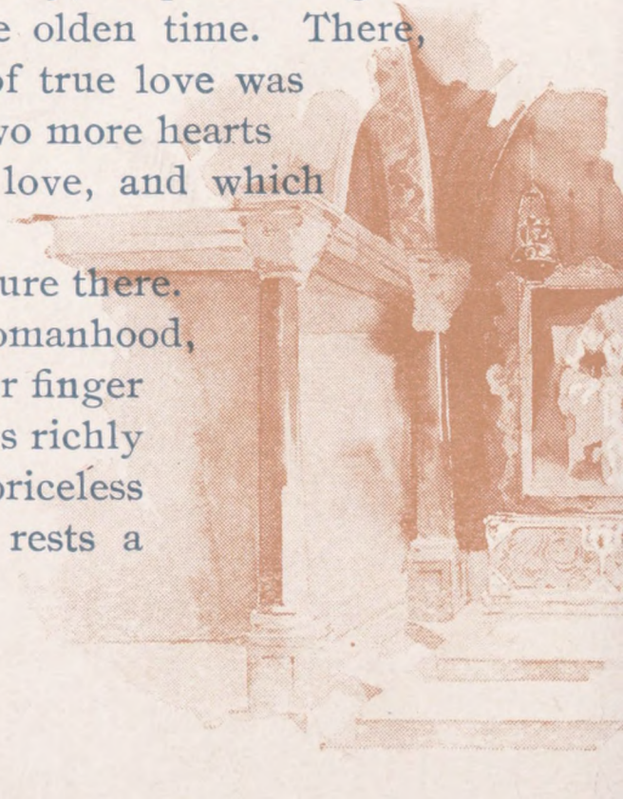
WILLIAM MERRIMAN PRICE.

PZ8
.P931MM

.. THE .. MISTLETOE .. BOUGH ..

"The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall;
And the Baron's retainers were blithe and gay
And keeping their Christmas holiday.
The Baron beheld with a father's pride,
His beautiful child, young Lovell's bride;
And she, with her bright eye, seemed to be
The star of that goodly company."

AT MODENA, in far-off Italy, stands a noble palace. Its gardens, rising terrace above terrace, are rich in fountains, statues and cypresses. Romantic, arched walks, dim even at noonday, inspire thoughts of brave knights and "ladies faire" of the olden time. There, doubtless, in long agone ages, many a tale of true love was whispered into willing ears, and, each time, two more hearts learned to beat in that sweet unison called love, and which sometimes means life.

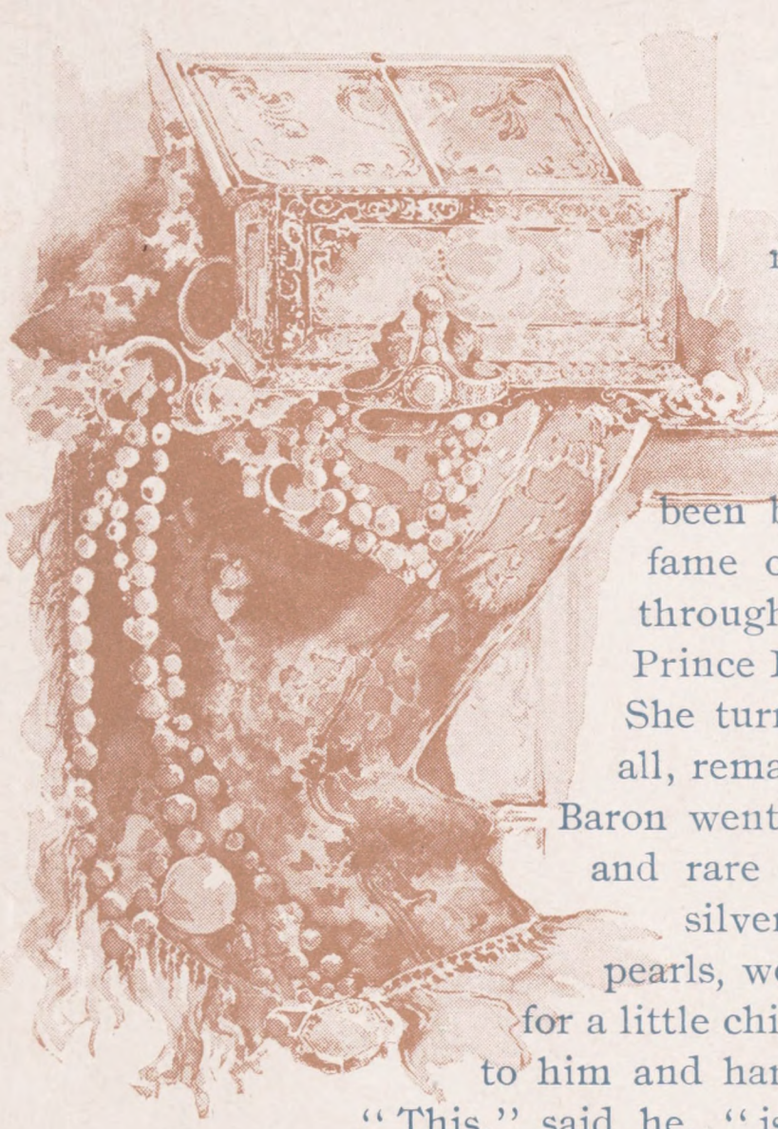


Leaving the gardens, enter the house and look well at a picture there. It is of a beautiful maiden in bridal robes. She is in her earliest womanhood, and sits inclining forward as if to speak, her lips half open and her finger up as though she were saying, "beware." Her golden vestment is richly embroidered with flowers and dotted o'er with clasps of gold, a priceless emerald in every clasp. On her brow, beautiful as alabaster, rests a coronet of pearls, each stone the size of a robin's egg.

But the beauty of her raiment is far transcended by that of her face, so lovely, arch and full of mirth it is, exhibiting the overflowings of a pure and innocent heart. Stand before this picture and gaze your fill. Then go away. Soon you will return to gaze anew, so strangely fascinating is the expression of those merry, sweet lips That picture you will not soon forget. With us, it lives a haunting memory, a weird, though beautiful presence. Beneath it, in strange contrast, stands an oaken chest, its sides curiously carved, and half eaten by the remorseless worm. This is the tale they tell :

Many centuries ago, in "Merrie England," there lived a proud Baron. His castle was gloomy and strong, with mighty towers, each strongly garrisoned, and surrounded by a deep moat constantly filled with water. The Baron's retainers were many ; his allegiance to his King unswerving. He was fierce and warlike, and fought many hard battles in England's defence. He was harsh and stern, a man of blood and iron, to all save one. A daughter, motherless at her birth, was the only being to whom the Baron threw open the doors of his softer nature. She was his joy, his pride, his ray of sunshine. On her he lavished all the affection of a strong nature, and to her he was always a kind and loving father. Her name, her mother's own, was Ginevra. It was the Baron's study to smooth from her path every care and trial, to brush aside the thorns which beset life's progress.

At the time our story opens, Ginevra had grown to womanhood, possessed of a sweet, sunny nature and beloved of all who knew her. She was almost sixteen, the next Christmas Day being her sixteenth birthday, and that day had been set apart as her wedding day. Her betrothed, the young Lord Lovell, was the son of a neighboring Baron, and a brave, handsome nobleman he was. Tall and well formed, and of distinguished bearing, he seemed indeed a fitting husband even for the lovely Ginevra. His



race was a noble one, some of his ancestors having followed the bold King Arthur through many a bloody fight.

Christmas finally came and with it Lord Lovell on his milk-white steed to claim his promised bride. These two young people had been betrothed since babyhood and loved each other fondly. The fame of Ginevra's beauty and accomplishments had so spread throughout the land that her suitors were legion, even the dashing Prince Edward, heir to the English throne, being of their number. She turned a deaf ear to their prayers, however, and dismissed them all, remaining true to him to whom she had given her heart. The Baron went to London for her wedding garments. They were as rich and rare as any princess might possess. Her veil was like unto a silver mist, and her slippers of beautiful white satin studded with pearls, were so tiny that you would surely have thought them meant for a little child. The night before the wedding, the Baron called Ginevra to him and handed her a curiously carved old ivory box.

"This," said he, "is thy mother's wedding gift—now is the time to wear it." Taking from his purse a small gold key covered with the quaint carvings of the Orient, he turned the lock. The lid flew up and showed, resting on a rich lining of delicately tinted violet velvet, a heap of strung pearls of marvelous size and superb quality.

"They are beautiful!" exclaimed Ginevra, in breathless admiration.

"Aye," said the Baron, "beautiful, indeed. Their like is not in old England. I bought them of the Turk in Constantinople on my way from Palestine. Wear them, little one, with thy father's blessing and as an appropriate symbol of thine own purity, for thou art to me a priceless pearl. And see, my daughter, here is thy wedding ring! It was thy

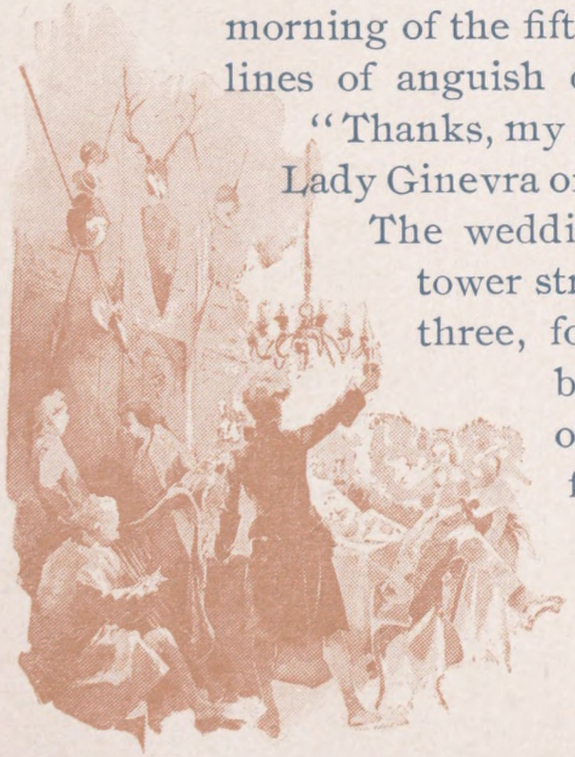
mother's, and within is engraved the name of both—Ginevra. It beareth a charm which brings good luck to its wearer. It has surely done so to me for have I not thee, my sweet?''

Lovely was the bride next day in her nuptial robe of purest white, fastened with golden clasps, each clasp set with an emerald; her vest of gold embroidered with flowers; her veil a floating mist, sweetest roses on her cheeks, and pearls upon her breast. Without, the storm raged fiercely and snow whitened the winter landscape. Notwithstanding, the wedding guests gathered in goodly numbers to do honor to the lovely bride and her noble lord. The joy bells rang; the prayer was said; the good old Priest pronounced his blessing, and Ginevra and Lord Lovell were made one flesh. Then came the wedding feast and Christmas revel combined. The long, ladies' hall, where the guests assembled, was a lordly room. Its floors were of polished oak. Richly carved wainscotings covered the walls and graceful columns supported the oaken ceiling. Christmas garlands were tastefully twined about. The holly, the ivy, and Christmas roses made the grand old room a very bower of beauty. A huge branch of mistletoe hung from the centre of the ceiling, promising a good night's sport. The feast was, indeed, a royal one. There were oxen roasted whole, huge pies of venison and game, and, holding a high place among the season's delicacies, a beautifully decorated pie made of peacock's flesh. The table was literally loaded with good cheer. On the old oak sideboard was a display of plate that rivaled the splendors of the courts of the East; flagons, cans, cups, beakers, goblets, basins, and ewers were there, the accumulation of several generations of good fellowship. On the broad hearth, the monster Yule log blazed merrily, shedding over the gay scene a soft radiance which transformed it into a fairy spectacle.

But when mirth was at its highest pitch, the fair young bride was suddenly missed from her place. "'Tis one of her childish tricks to make trial of our love," cried the Baron. "One more cup to Lady Lovell! Pass round the wassail bowl once more!" He raised the cup on high, but his arm shook as though with palsy, and the cup went crashing to the floor. The panic quickly spread among the guests. Searching parties, bearing lighted torches, hurried anxiously through every nook and corner of the gloomy old castle. It was filled with dark passages, whose devious windings few could understand. All night long the searchers worked with feverish eagerness, but, alas, all in vain. At daybreak, they came straggling back disheartened, white, and trembling, for they remembered the ominous words of an old gypsy—"*the Lady Ginevra is doomed.*"

Lord Lovell—oh, how changed—hunted on, without food or rest, when all others had given up in despair. He called aloud, through gallery and passage, "Come to me! Come, or thou art lost!" And the cutting wind, moaning through the darkness, echoed back the answer, "Lost!"

Four days and five long dreary nights were spent in searching the castle. On the morning of the fifth day, the Baron, his whilom coal-black hair now as white as snow, and lines of anguish deeply graven on his face, in a hoarse, changed voice, spoke thus:



"Thanks, my friends, every one. Be it remembered, he who bringeth me trace of the Lady Ginevra or clew to her finding, shall have what he may ask, were it half my barony."

The wedding guests turned to go. But, at that moment, the great bell on the tower struck one. A death-like silence followed! List, it speaks again; two, three, four; it rang seventeen! What did this mean? No one inhabited the bell tower and the ropes were never touched, except at a birth, a wedding, or—could it be—a death? Were fairy hands tolling a solemn requiem for the passing soul of the lost Ginevra? Was its ringing a sign that she must now be numbered among the saints in heaven? Who could say?

Till this moment, the Baron had not shed a tear. When the last, sad tones of the bell died away, he covered his face with his hands and big drops fell through his fingers like pouring rain. Children clung in terror to their mother's skirts; women sobbed together in groups; and stalwart warriors, too brave to be ashamed of tears, fell into each other's arms and wept aloud. Sad was the ending to that gay, Christmas revel. Never were wedding guests like those who, that day, passed through the snowclad forest, where the wind seemed wailing the words—"Farewell; farewell—forever."

From that fatal hour nothing could be guessed save that Ginevra was not. When a year had dragged its weary length away, Lord Lovell, haggard and sunken eyed, gave up hope and threw his life away fighting the Turk on the burning sands of the Holy Land. The Baron never rested from his search. All day and all night the old man, wrinkled and bent, sought his lost darling through doleful chambers and darkened galleries. At last they found him lying on a staircase in a remote part of the castle, a tiny pair of satin slippers, yellow and faded, clasped tightly to his breast. The dull grief throbs were stilled, the wearied spirit at rest, for his soul had passed to its eternal home, and was even then rejoicing with that of his lost darling in the presence of the Prince of Peace.

Years went by and the old castle was tenantless, save for the owl who made his home in the gloomy tower. The stone battlements were moss-grown; the gardens a waste of weeds. After a century had passed away, it was sold into the hands of strangers. One day, while workmen were repairing the grand staircase, a secret door, which had rusted off its hinges, fell in and disclosed a room, dark as the grave. In its dim recesses an old oaken chest was found. A maid, as young and thoughtless as Ginevra, said: "Why not remove it from its lurking place

and see what it holds." The workmen slowly dragged it forth, but 'twas so old, that on being jostled it fell asunder, and lo, mouldering within, a skeleton appeared! About its head circled a coronet of pearls; here and there, held in a clasp of gold, sparkled an emerald; and in a pile of dust that once had been a hand was found a nuptial ring engraved within, "Ginevra."

"O sad was her fate when, in sportive jest,
She hid from her lord in the old oak chest;
It closed with a spring and her bridal bloom,
Lay withering there in a lonely tomb."

A sad Christmas story this. We would gladly make it happier, but cannot. The tale is a true one, and its very sadness must be its apology.

The old time Christmas, however, was far from being a period of grief. It was ever a season of delight. Its revels lasted full twelve days, and were presided over by a merry fellow called the Lord of Misrule. Mirth-sounds filled the air; and ivy, red-berried holly and blooming roses helped to create an atmosphere of Christmas cheer. From each oaken ceiling hung the favorite mistletoe, at once a menance and an invitation to the pretty girls of the gay company. Waits, or serenaders, sang good old Christmas carols before the principal houses, and troops of merry maskers, decked out in fanciful costumes, held high carnival. The Yule log, or Christmas block, was burnt on Christmas eve and, early Christmas morning, the halls of the old castles and manor houses were thrown open, and "rich and poor were alike welcome to enter and make merry."

Then there was gaming, wrestling and trying of strength, and, incidentally, a few bloody noses and cracked skulls, occurrences of small moment in those rough times. The Christmas dinner was an event to be remembered. Each board literally groaned with hospitality. Boar's head, plum-pudding, minced pies, the sacred peacock pie and "nut browne" wassail held first places in popular esteem, and the music of harp and horn, and snatches of merry song increased the zest with which each guest partook of the ample feast.

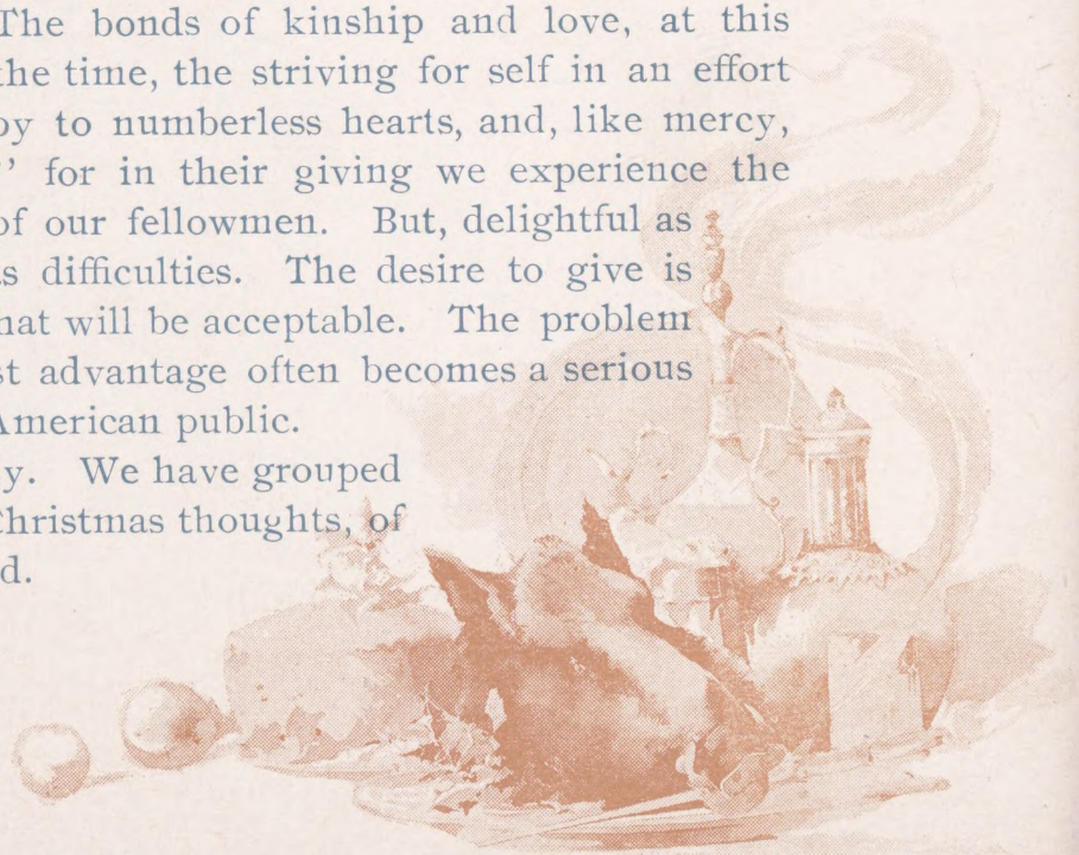
In short, the Christmas season was a rollicking jubilee looked forward to with liveliest anticipations, and indulged in with equal heartiness by both old and young.

The Christmas of to-day, though quieter, is none the less happy. The rollicking customs adapted to the ruder civilization of our forefathers have been modified to suit modern needs, and our Christmas is the same joyous holiday as

"In days of old, when Knights were bold,
And Barons held their sway."

There is one of the old customs which still remains, and which seems to ever strengthen its hold on the hearts of the people as years go by—the glorious sentiment of "Peace on Earth, Good-Will to Men." The bonds of kinship and love, at this season, are drawn closer, and men forget for the time, the striving for self in an effort to make others happy. Love tokens bring joy to numberless hearts, and, like mercy, bless "him that gives and him that takes," for in their giving we experience the exquisite pleasure of sacrificing for the good of our fellowmen. But, delightful as the Christmas season is, it is not without its difficulties. The desire to give is seldom accompanied by a knowledge of just what will be acceptable. The problem of investing our Christmas savings to the best advantage often becomes a serious one, particularly with so busy a people as the American public.

This knowledge is what we aim to supply. We have grouped together for your aid thousands of beautiful Christmas thoughts, of so varied a nature that all tastes may be satisfied.



Sterling Silver Novelties

There are sterling silver novelties of every sort. The demands of trade have been so great that the establishment of a special department for this class of goods becomes a necessity, and we enter the new field fully equipped to supply all needs. Our stock is crowded with choice things, clever ideas evolved after a close study of the world's best markets. Delightful surprises for every one are included in its list, and the low costs form another surprise, just as happy. Appended are a few jogs to sluggish memories :

BRACELETS SCARF PINS BROOCHES

BONBONIERS GLOVE HOOKS VINAIGRETTES

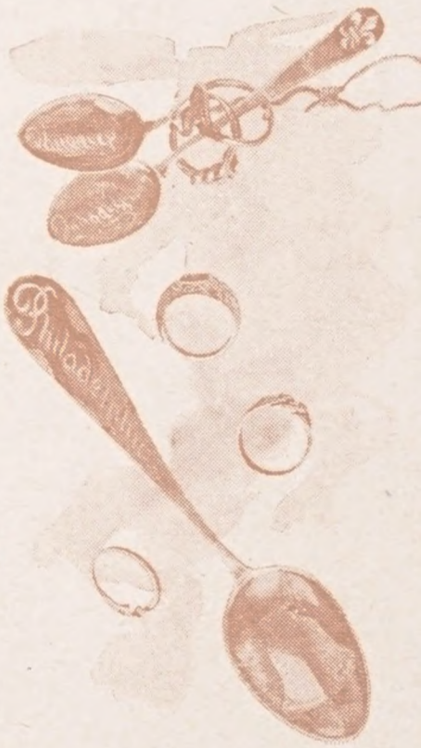
TABLETS CHATELAINES WHISTLES

BELT BUCKLES GARTER BUCKLES SHOE BUCKLES

PENCILS FLASKS MATCH BOXES

STAMP BOXES PEN WIPERS COURT PLASTER CASES

PURSES SHOE HOOKS



Jewelry

Then there are many fortunates whose purses possess qualities too elastic to be satisfied by sterling silver ideas. For such, our thoughts are "golden." The line of jewelry is always fine, perhaps the finest there is. But, we believe that the "best" can always be excelled, and, this season, we have made an extra effort. Result—even our own record is broken and you reap the benefit. Examine a few of the winning names:

RINGS

LACE PINS

BRACELETS

NECKLACES

QUEEN CHAINS

LOCKETS

BROOCHES

CUFF BUTTONS AND LINKS

VEST CHAINS

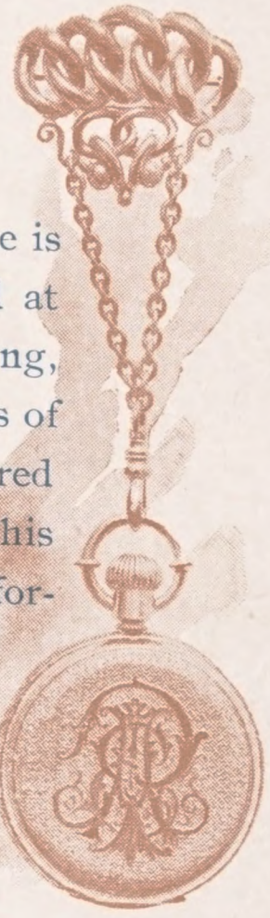
PENDANTS

STUDS

EAR RINGS

SCARF PINS

Watches



In this age of bustle and electricity, every one needs a watch. Old Father Time is a wary fellow and needs looking after. Helps in this task are here in profusion and at prices merely nominal. A necessary quality of a good time-piece, as of every good thing, is faithfulness. Our watches possess this quality in an eminent degree, as hundreds of carriers can attest. We make a specialty of the **"Z. J. P."** which is manufactured expressly and solely for us. It is cased in 14 or 18 K. gold, hunting or open face. This watch possesses three notable characteristics--beauty, cheapness, and reliability—a formidable trio this, as our competitors have discovered.

The **Z. J. P.'s,** however, are only one class of a large stock. We have every conceivable sort of time-piece which is embraced under the heads

PLAIN TIMERS

CHRONOGRAPHS

REPEATERS AND THE

VARIOUS COMPLICATIONS

Designing

Although our stock is so large and widely varied that one would think it capable of meeting every demand on it, yet experience has taught us that human foresight is not sufficiently acute to provide for all emergencies. You may have some special desire which nothing we have on hand will satisfy. We have provided a department whose aim is to supply such wants, be they what they may. It is presided over by our Mr. Péquignot, who devotes his individual attention to its management, and he is ready to put into tangible shape the "something" which you have in your mind's eye, but have not yet succeeded in bringing within range of the physical organ of vision. Unique designs to suit the most cultivated tastes are the *chef d'œuvre* of this department.

Repairing

You may have a few pieces of choice jewelry, which have been relegated to an obscure corner of the jewel case, because of a fancied inability to have them properly repaired. Bring them to us. We have secured the very best of workmen for our Repair Department, and are ready, therefore, to cope successfully with all jobs, whether simple or complicated.

Remounting Diamonds

Look again in the jewel case. Perhaps you will find there a diamond whose beauties are handicapped by a bad setting. *Tempora Mutantur!* Dame Fashion demands changes in the dress of a precious stone just as strenuously as in that of individuals. Bring the gems to us, for we have ever been close students of this charming lady's most capricious whims, and our experience may be of infinite service to you in obeying her latest mandates.

Z. J. PÉQUIGNOT, Jeweler

806 CHESTNUT STREET

PHILADELPHIA

JANUARY.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	..	..	..	..	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	..	..	..	..	..	..

FEBRUARY.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..

MARCH.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	..	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..

APRIL.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	..	..	..	..	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
..	..	..	..	..	..	..

MAY.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..

JUNE.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	..	..	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..

JULY.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	..	..	..	..	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	..	..	..	..	..	..

AUGUST.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..

SEPTEMBER.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	..	..	..	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..

OCTOBER.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	..	..	..	..	..	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	..	..	..	..	..

NOVEMBER.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	..	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..

DECEMBER.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
..	..	..	..	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
..	..	..	..	..	..	..

X107

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

WERT
BOOKBINDING
Grantville, Pa.
Sept—Oct 1985
We're Quality Bound

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

00022866813